

a fingerprint scanner configured to scan the user's fingerprint when the user's finger is resting on the finger pad; ~~to identify fingerprint features on the user's fingerprint; and~~

~~wherein the fingerprint features are convertible into a code that can be mapped to the fingerprint features to uniquely identify the user;~~

a feature identifier in communication with the fingerprint scanner and configured to identify a plurality of fingerprint features of the user's fingerprint scanned by the fingerprint scanner; and

a converter in communication with the feature identifier and configured to convert fingerprint features identified by the fingerprint scanner into a private key code.

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2. (original) The electronic writing instrument as recited in claim 1, further comprising a ball point pen cartridge, and wherein the nib further comprises a ball on an end of the ball point pen cartridge.

3. (currently amended) The electronic writing instrument as recited in claim 1, wherein the ~~code further comprises a computer code~~ converter is configured to convert fingerprint features identified by the fingerprint scanner into a private key code, wherein the private key code includes at least one digit for each feature identified by the feature identifier, each digit having a value representing a degree of the fingerprint feature associated with that digit.

4. (cancelled)

5. (original) The electronic writing instrument as recited in claim 1, further comprising an output port configured to output data from the writing instrument to a computing device.

6. (original) The electronic writing instrument as recited in claim 1, further comprising a wireless transmitter configured to transmit data from the writing instrument to a wireless receiver located remote from the writing instrument.

7. (currently amended) The electronic writing instrument as recited in claim 1, wherein the converter is configured to convert fingerprint features identified by the fingerprint scanner into a private key code is a private key code that can be used to create a public key code that uniquely identifies the user by identifying the fingerprint features.

8. (currently amended) The electronic writing instrument as recited in claim 1, wherein the converter is configured to convert fingerprint features identified by the fingerprint scanner into a private key code, wherein the private key code is used to create at least a part of an electronic signature.

9. (original) A method, comprising:  
scanning a fingerprint to obtain fingerprint data related to fingerprint features;  
transforming the fingerprint data into a private key code; and  
creating a public key code from the private key code.

10. (original) The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising incorporating the public key code into an electronic signature.

11. (original) The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the scanning a fingerprint further comprises scanning a fingerprint of a person who is using an electronic writing instrument while the person is using the electronic writing instrument.

12. (original) A method, comprising:  
receiving fingerprint data;  
transforming the fingerprint data into a private key code uniquely identifying the fingerprint;  
deriving a public key code from the private key code; and  
incorporating the public key code into an electronic signature.

13. (original) The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the receiving fingerprint data further comprises scanning a fingerprint from an electronic writing instrument to obtain the fingerprint data.

14. (original) The method as recited in claim 12, further comprising affixing the electronic signature to an electronic document.

15. (original) The method as recited in claim 14, wherein the affixing the electronic signature to an electronic document further comprises scanning a document to create a corresponding electronic document and affixing the electronic signature to the corresponding electronic document.

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16. (currently amended) One or more computer-readable media containing computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, perform the following steps:

scanning a fingerprint of a writing instrument user to obtain fingerprint data that uniquely identifies the fingerprint; and

identifying a plurality of fingerprint features of the user's scanned fingerprint; and

converting the identified fingerprint features into a private key code.

~~transmitting the fingerprint data to a computing device that uses the fingerprint data to create an electronic signature that is uniquely associated with the user.~~

17. (currently amended) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 16, containing further computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, further comprising converting the fingerprint data into a private key code, and wherein the transmitting further comprises transmitting the private key code to a computing device that uses the private key code to create an the electronic signature.

18. (currently amended) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim ~~46~~ 17, wherein the transmitting further comprises transmitting the fingerprint data to the computing device over a wireless link.

19. (currently amended) One or more computer-readable media containing computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, perform the following steps:

receiving fingerprint data from an electronic writing instrument;  
creating a public key code using the fingerprint data; and  
creating an electronic signature using the public key code ~~fingerprint data~~.

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20. (original) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 19, wherein the fingerprint data further comprises fingerprint data that uniquely identifies fingerprint features included in the fingerprint.

21. (currently amended) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 20, containing further computer-executable instructions that, when executed on a computer, further comprising converting converts the fingerprint data into a public key code that can be uniquely mapped to the fingerprint related to the fingerprint data.

22. (original) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 19, wherein the fingerprint data further comprises a private key code derived from the fingerprint data.

23. (original) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 19, wherein the creating an electronic signature further comprises directly incorporating the fingerprint data into the electronic signature.

24. (original) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 19, wherein the creating an electronic signature further comprises:  
converting the fingerprint data into a private key code; and

incorporating the private key code into the electronic signature.

25. (original) The one or more computer-readable media as recited in claim 19, wherein the creating an electronic signature further comprises:

converting the fingerprint data into a private key code;

creating a public key code from the private key code; and

incorporating the public key code into the electronic signature.

26. (new) The method of claim 9, wherein transforming comprises transforming the fingerprint data into a private key code, wherein the private key code includes at least one digit for each feature identified by the feature identifier, each digit having a value representing a degree of the fingerprint feature associated with that digit.

27. (new) The method of claim 12, wherein transforming comprises transforming the fingerprint data into a private key code, wherein the private key code includes at least one digit for each feature identified by the feature identifier, each digit having a value representing a degree of the fingerprint feature associated with that digit.

28. (new) The one or more computer readable media as recited in claim 16, wherein the converting of the identified fingerprint features into a private key code comprises converting the identified fingerprint features into a private key code, wherein the private key code includes at least one digit for each feature identified by the feature identifier, each digit having a value representing a degree of the fingerprint feature associated with that digit.

29. (new) The one or more computer readable media as recited in claim 22, wherein the private key code includes at least one digit for each feature identified by the feature identifier, each digit having a value representing a degree of the fingerprint feature associated with that digit.

30. (new) An electronic writing instrument, comprising:

a body;

a nib located at an end of the body for applying writing strokes on a surface;

a finger pad on the length of the body on which a fingerprint of a user's finger rests when the user is holding the writing instrument in a writing position;

a means for scanning the user's fingerprint when the user's finger is resting on the finger pad;

a means for identifying a plurality of fingerprint features of the user's fingerprint scanned by the means for scanning; and

a means for converting fingerprint features identified by the means for identifying into a private key code.

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